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RECENT LITERATURE.

The Glacial Nightmare and The Flood.¹—In these two volumes Sir Henry Howorth undertakes to show how the Glacial Theory, as usually taught, is not sound, that it is based upon hypotheses, some of which cannot be verified, while others can be shown to be false. In facing the solution of the Drift problem he postulates a catastrophe, viz., a widespread flood, to explain the geological phenomena of the Plistocene period, and to account for the extinction of the fauna of that time. The work is limited to a consideration of the so-called drift beds and frequent reference to the literature of the subject is made. The opening chapters are compilations of the arguments advanced and conclusions reached by all authorities of the present century upon the subject, and many who date from the middle of the last. The second volume discusses the inadequacy of ice to meet the calls made upon its working power by the glacialists, with a concluding chapter in which the author claims that the only explanation of the distribution of the drift is a great diluvial catastrophe, and he points out in detail how the many facts of the drift are in accord with this theory. Examples are cited of the distribution by rapidly moving water of erratics, and also of the production of striæ by the latter. In some cases these striæ are seen on the blocks transported by the water, and again upon the surfaces over which the detritus has been impelled.

An important omission in the chain of evidence presented by Mr. Howorth, in favor of his theory, is the *cause* of the flood. Save for a brief reference in his preface to “the rapid and perhaps sudden upheaval of some of the largest mountain chains in the world, accompanied probably by great subsidences of land elsewhere,” there is no reference to this point, upon which the whole theory seems to rest.

Life Histories of North American Birds.²—This work is one of a series in quarto form intended to illustrate the collections in the U. S. National Museum. The present volume relates only to land birds, and while the main object is to make it a systematic and com-

¹ *The Glacial Nightmare and The Flood.* 2 vols. By Sir Henry H. Howorth. London, 1893. Sampson Low, Marston and Co. Publishers.

² *Life Histories of Birds, with special reference to their Breeding Habits and Eggs.* By Charles Bendire, Captain, U. S. A. Special Bulletin No. 1, U. S. Natl. Mus. Washington, 1892.

prehensive work on the oölogy of North America there is incorporated in the text the latest information as to the life history, the migratory and breeding ranges, and the food of each species. The classification given in the Code and Check List of the American Ornithologists' Union has been followed.

The illustrations comprise 12 chromolithographic plates, reproduced from water-color drawings of eggs belonging to the collections in the U. S. Natl. Museum.

The long residence of Capt. Bendire in the far west, has given him exceptional opportunities for observing the habits of the birds. He describes them in a most interesting manner, and he weaves into his narratives some glimpses of military life, and frontier adventure, which add an especial flavor to the book.

Geology of the Coastal Plain of Alabama.³—Under this title Mr. E. A. Smith presents a report which embodies the results of a thorough study of the Cenozoic formations of the Coastal Plain of Alabama. Part I is substantially a republication of Bull. 43 U. S. Geol. Surv. with some additions and slight alterations, followed by a full report by D. W. Langdon of the variations of the Eocene and Cretaceous formations in the territory between the Alabama and Chattahoochee rivers, together with a account of his discoveries of the Marine Miocene formations at Chattahoochee and Alum Bluff in Florida. Part II deals with the various phosphatic marls, green sands, etc., occurring in this part of the state. Part III, includes county descriptions in detail.

The series of Marine Eocene and Cretaceous formations is exposed along the Alabama rivers more fully than anywhere else in the Eastern States, and the scale here illustrated will serve as a standard for other regions.

Thirteenth Annual Report of the U. S. Geological Survey for 1891-'92. Part II.⁴—The report of the Director for 1891-'92 is published in three parts, of which Part II is devoted to Geology and comprises the following papers: Second Expedition to Mt. St. Elias including an account of the Malaspina Glacier, by Israel Cook Russell; The Geological History of Harbors, by N. S. Shaler; The Mechanics

³ Report on the Geology of the Coastal Plain of Alabama by E. A. Smith, L. C. Johnson and D. W. Langdon, Jr. With Contributions to its Paleontology by T. H. Aldrich and K. M. Cunningham. Montgomery, Alabama, 1894.

⁴ Thirteenth Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey, 1891-'92, Pt. II, Geology; Pt. III, Irrigation. By J. W. Powell. Washington, 1893.